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MEMORANDUM

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South Vietnamese Ammunition Expenditures, 1972-1974

1. During 1974 South Vietnamese ground forces expended about 205,000 short tons of ammunition, about 37% less than the 326,000 tons they fired in 1973 and only one-quarter of the record high 788,000 tons in 1972 (see Table 1). The artillery component of the expenditures showed a similar decline during the period, indicating the overall composition of expenditures of ground ammunition remained relatively constant. In 1974, for example, a total of about 3.8 million artillery rounds were fired, 78% less than the 1972 expenditure of 17.2 million rounds.

Table 1

South Vietnamese Ammunition Expenditures, 1972-1974

	<u>Short tons</u> <u>(thousands)</u>	<u>% of 1972 expenditures</u>
1972	788	100%
1973	326	41%
1974	205	26%

	<u>Millions of pounds</u>	<u>% of 1972 expenditures</u>
1972	17.2	100%
1973	5.7	33%
1974	3.8	22%

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2. The drop in expenditures in 1974 indicated by the preceding table is somewhat misleading, however, because the heaviest expenditures in 1973 occurred shortly before and after the 27 January cease-fire. During the last three quarters of 1973, South Vietnamese forces fired an average of only 494 tons of ammunition and 8,340 artillery rounds daily. These figures compare with an average rate of expenditure of 561 tons of ammunition and 10,300 artillery rounds during 1974, indicating a rise in South Vietnamese ammunition consumption since March 1973. Moreover, the lowest expenditure level in the post-cease-fire period occurred in the second quarter of 1973, while the highest was in the third quarter of 1974.

3. The rising trend in South Vietnamese expenditures is illustrated in Table 2, showing daily expenditure rates by quarter. The ratio included in the table shows that South Vietnamese consumption of artillery ammunition relative to other types reached a peak during the third quarter of 1972 which, significantly, was also the highest expenditure rate for GVN ground forces. In contrast, the lowest proportion of artillery expenditures occurred during periods of relatively low combat.

Table 2

Daily South Vietnamese Ammunition
Expenditures By Quarter, 1972-1974

	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Arty rds</u>	<u>Arty rds:tons</u>
<u>1972</u>	<u>2,154</u>	<u>46,930</u>	<u>22:1</u>
1st Qtr	1,311	28,040	21:1
2nd Qtr	2,448	52,800	22:1
3rd Qtr	2,907	66,120	23:1
4th Qtr	1,951	40,750	21:1
<u>1973</u>	<u>892</u>	<u>15,580</u>	<u>17:1</u>
1st Qtr	2,118	37,300	18:1
2nd Qtr	410	7,280	18:1
3rd Qtr	448	7,820	17:1
4th Qtr	593	9,920	17:1
<u>1974</u>	<u>561</u>	<u>10,300</u>	<u>18:1</u>
1st Qtr	521	9,150	18:1
2nd Qtr	499	10,620	21:1
3rd Qtr	672	11,910	18:1
4th Qtr	553	9,520	17:1

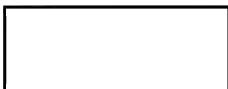
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4. Previous reporting has indicated that in early September, 1974 the South Vietnamese initiated a major effort to conserve ammunition in response to the cutbacks in U.S. military aid. Analysis of expenditure data for the fourth quarter shows that the GVN has had some success. Since September, South Vietnamese expenditures have averaged 16,820 tons a month -- a drop of 18% from the third quarter's expenditure rate and about 2% less than the average rate registered during the first nine months of 1974. Although a low rate of combat prevailed during October and November, South Vietnamese expenditures in December -- a period of intensified fighting -- remained below 600 tons daily, considerably less than the 672 tons a day fired during the heavy fighting last summer.

5. With respect to stockpiles, the South Vietnamese will have ample ammunition to maintain their fourth quarter 1974 expenditure through 1975. Already some 100,000 tons of ammunition are stockpiled in the country -- equivalent to about six month's supply at last quarter's rate. Moreover, 65,000 additional tons of ammunition are scheduled to arrive through the regular pipeline, and another 28,000 tons will be transferred to South Vietnam from Laos. These deliveries will leave South Vietnam with a total of 193,000 tons of ammunition available for use through June, 1975. This amount of ammunition would support only 80 days of combat at the expenditure rate of 2,400 tons a day averaged during the 1972 offensive, but at the 1974 peak expenditure it would last about nine and one-half months.



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